



Discussion Group Packet

Film Discussion Guidelines

Next week you will be leading the class in a discussion of the film you just saw. In other words, you will be teaching the class. That's kind of scary at first, but most of the students who have done it really seemed to enjoy it and got a lot out of it. Most of the groups have done some very good things. Here are some guidelines to help you make your class successful:

- Plan enough activities to teach the entire class period. In reality I will need about 5-10 minutes at the end of class to talk about the next film, etc., but it is better for you to have too many activities than not enough.
- The most important thing about class discussion is to involve the class as much as possible. Some ways to do this:
 - Break the class up into small discussion groups of about 5 students to talk about questions you ask.
 - Write the questions you want students to discuss on the board and make sure they know what you want them to do.
 - When students are discussing among themselves all the members of your group should scatter around the room listening in on discussions to help students as necessary and to make sure that they are speaking English.
 - If students aren't responding to your questions it's OK to call on them anyway.
 - It's OK to use Chinese names when calling on students.
 - Have students stand when they talk. This makes it easier to hear them in the back of the room.
- Giving background information on the movie is OK but please don't use information from the textbook; students can read this for themselves. The internet is a great source of new information. Please limit background information and plot summaries to about 5 or 10 minutes.

Activities for Film Discussions

You can use any or none of these ideas; it's up to you:

1. Write some discussion questions on the board and divide the class into groups to talk about them. You can use some of the questions in this packet and/or questions on the homework assignments. (The post-viewing homework is especially good for finding discussion questions.) Better yet, make up some questions of your own.

Important Note: Write the questions on the board *before class* starts or *during the break*. Do not waste time by writing questions while the class is waiting for you.

One good way of dividing the class in to discussion groups is to have them count off from 1 to 5 (or whatever). All the 1s go to the first group, the 2s to the second, etc.

2. Move groups up to sit in the front of the class instead of at their tables.
3. Game: this game is a variation on Count-7. Before class your group writes questions about the movie on strips of paper and puts them into a container. During class have students count off starting with 1. When a student gets any number with 7 (7, 17, 27, etc.) or a multiple of 7 (14, 21, 28, etc.) in it, they must say "pass." If they say the number, they must come to the front and draw a question from the container and either answer it or call on someone from the class to answer it.
4. Game: Stump the Experts. Divide the class into two teams. Each team selects two members as experts to stand in front of the class. The moderator (one of your group) calls on volunteers to ask an expert from the other team a question. If the expert gets the answer:
 - right, their team gets a point.
 - wrong, the person who asked the question must answer the question correctly. If the person who asked the question gets the answer:

- right, they go up front and become an expert
 - wrong, their team loses two points and they don't become an expert.
5. Write up a summary of the movie plot and then print a copy for each group. Cut the copies into strips, one paragraph or sentence on each strip. Mix up the strips and give them to the groups. The groups have to put the strips in the right order.
 6. Have students imagine what happened to the characters 5-10 years after the movie was over.
 7. Have students write their own questions about the movie then ask them to the class.
 8. For the last activity, ask every student in the class to rate the film in stars, 5 stars being great, 4 good, etc. and tell why they think so. Tally the number of stars on the board using English-type tally marks (ⅢⅢⅢⅢⅢ).

A Beautiful Mind

Some Possible Questions for ESL Class Discussion

from www.eslnotes.com

- 1) Do madness and genius appear often together?
- 2) Would John Nash not have been a genius without the schizophrenia?
- 3) Do you know anybody who has suffered from schizophrenia? How has it compared to what John experienced?
- 4) In what ways were John's life and modern history related?
- 5) Should the state have the right to force schizophrenics into mental institutions in order to give them treatment?
- 6) How are the mentally ill treated in China?
- 7) Ultimately, was this film optimistic?
- 8) What did you like and not like about it?

Discussion Questions from the Textbook

1. For a long time John was living in a delusion. Give some examples of some of his delusions in the movie.
2. What do you think was the cause of John's mental illness?
3. What kind of person was Alicia Nash?
4. In what way is John lucky and in what way is he unlucky?
5. What great impetus does Alicia have to help John to conquer the illness?

6. John is seriously mentally ill. Do you think he has lost his ability to love?
7. John Nash gave a summary of his life at the Nobel Prize ceremony. What in his life does he cherish the most?

Additional discussion questions...

1. Can you explain the game theory that John thought of that won him the Nobel Prize? (See the dialog on page 4 of your textbook.)
2. If you were Alicia Nash, what would you have done? Would you have stayed with John or would you have left him?
3. The Cold War was a time characterized by general fear and paranoia in America. How did this influence John's illness? Would he have been mentally ill if there were no Cold War at the time?
4. If this movie were made in China about a brilliant Chinese mathematician, how might the movie be the same? How might it be different?

Code cracking ...

Write a message in a simple code on the board and let the class try to figure out what the message says. *For example:*

UESA NBI BITMBNZ SU WSNSETINY NS NBI QIJNBZ SU
QIJELCTNY, KSBW USEDIZ WLZB, KE. IFJETIWRIQ TN LPP.
L ALNBIALNTRLP MIWTXZ, BI ALQI LW LZNSWTZBTWM
QTZRSCIEY ILEPY TW BTZ RLEIIE LWQ ZNSSQ SW NBI
DETWG SU TWNIEWLNTSWLP LRRPLTA.

Translation:

From the heights of notoriety to the depths of depravity, John Forbes Nash, Jr. experienced it all. A mathematical genius, he made an astonishing discovery early in his career and stood on the brink of international acclaim.